

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 6, 2019

Mr. Dennis A. Muilenburg
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Boeing Company
100 North Riverside Plaza
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Mr. Muilenburg,

We write to express our concerns regarding two aspects of your testimony before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation last Wednesday.

First, we are interested in clarifying Boeing's position on whether or not the recent 737 MAX crashes were the result of pilot error. During your testimony, in response to a question from Senator Udall, you stated the following:

"I do think it's important for me to clarify a point that you made earlier. We - we have not blamed the pilots and I know that's been reported but that is not our company position and it never will be. We are responsible for our airplanes, we are responsible, and we own that, regardless of cause. Any accident with one of our airplanes is unacceptable."

Unfortunately, your response is not accurate. Your staff made the assertion in meetings with multiple Senate offices that the pilots and the aviation culture of the countries involved were a significant part of the problems leading to the crashes. In addition, you also said something very similar during Boeing's April 29, 2019 shareholder meeting. According to multiple media reports, you said the pilots did not "completely" follow the procedures that Boeing had outlined to prevent the kind of malfunction that probably caused the crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302. A Lion Air 737 MAX crashed under similar circumstances last October.¹

We also have concerns about your response at the hearing about efforts at Boeing to conceal the existence of the Boeing 737 MAX's automated flight control system (MCAS) from the original Flight Crew Operation Manual (FCOM) – an aircraft-training manual for pilots. Based upon recently released e-mails between Mark Forkner, Boeing's Chief Technical Pilot on the 737 MAX at the time, and unidentified employees at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Boeing minimized or obscured the presence of the MCAS system – repeatedly asking the FAA to delete mention of it in the manual. In fact, in the over 1,600-page original FCOM for Boeing's 737 MAX 8, the aircraft's new MCAS computer system was mentioned only once by name – in

¹ *Boeing CEO Says 737 Max was designed properly and pilots did not 'completely' follow procedure.* Chris Isidore. CNN Business. <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/04/29/investing/boeing-annual-meeting/index.html>

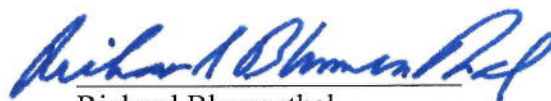
the glossary of abbreviated terms.² Senator Blumenthal made this point at Wednesday's hearing, and your evasive response as to when you became aware of this effort raises more questions about Boeing's commitment to safety. Boeing's position that these crashes were the result of pilot error does not hold water if important information about MCAS was stricken, or otherwise intentionally or insufficiently disclosed, from pilot manuals and training materials.

With that in mind, we ask that you that you revise your statement provided to the Senate Commerce Committee by November 13, 2019 to either acknowledge that Boeing did assign blame on the pilots of the two downed aircraft or explain how your previous statement is consistent with your testimony. Additionally, we ask that you confirm whether MCAS was at any time included or intended to be included in the flight operation manual for pilots or any differences training.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Udall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Udall" clearly distinguishable.

Tom Udall
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Blumenthal". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Richard" and last name "Blumenthal" clearly distinguishable.

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

² 737 Max Flight Manual May Have Left MCAS Information on 'cutting room floor'. Mark Gollom, Alex Shprintsen, and Frederic Zalac. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/boeing-737-manual-mcas-system-plane-crash-1.5065842>